



**Peter Boal**  
Artistic Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Gary Tucker

206.441.2426

[gtucker@pnb.org](mailto:gtucker@pnb.org)

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET PRESENTS REPERTORY PROGRAM 6:**

# **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**

**Featuring works by**

**GEORGE BALANCHINE – JEROME ROBBINS – CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON**

**May 28–June 7, 2009**

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall  
321 Mercer Street, Seattle Center  
Seattle, WA 98109

May 28-30 & June 4-6 at 7:30 pm

May 30 at 2:00 pm

June 7 at 1:00 pm

**Seattle, WA** — Pacific Northwest Ballet Artistic Director Peter Boal's yearly **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** programs highlight both the addition of new works to the repertory and the works of the great choreographers of our time. This year's **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** program, the sixth and final repertory program of PNB's 2008-2009 season, delivers a trio of seminal works by three of this century's most influential choreographers, including two PNB premieres: Jerome Robbins' *Dances at a Gathering*, considered by many to be the choreographer's greatest achievement in ballet; Christopher Wheeldon's recent but already iconic *After the Rain pas de deux*; and George Balanchine's *Symphony in C*, perhaps his greatest essay in formal classicism. **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** runs from May 28 through June 7 at Seattle Center's Marion Oliver McCaw Hall. Tickets to **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** may be purchased by calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, online at [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org), or in person at the PNB Box Office located at 301 Mercer Street.

The line-up for **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** will include:

***Dances at a Gathering*** — PNB Premiere

*Music:* Frederic Chopin

*Choreography:* Jerome Robbins

*Dances at a Gathering* was the first ballet Jerome Robbins made for New York City Ballet upon his return to the company in 1969, following a 12-year absence during which he choreographed some of his best-known Broadway musicals. An hour-long suite for ten dancers, set to solo piano works by Frederic Chopin, *Dances at a Gathering* began as a pas de deux. Robbins selected more music and the ballet grew. He invited Balanchine to see a rehearsal, asking him if the ballet wasn't a bit long. Balanchine watched the rehearsal, and then said, "More. Make more!" Speaking before the premiere, Robbins explained, "I'm doing a fairly classical ballet to very old fashioned and romantic music, but there is a point to it. In a way it is a revolt from the faddism today. I find myself feeling just what is the matter with connecting, what's the matter with love, what's the matter with celebrating positive things?"

Jerome Robbins dedicated *Dances at a Gathering* to the memory of lighting designer Jean Rosenthal.

The PNB premiere of Jerome Robbins' *Dances at a Gathering* is generously underwritten by Jeffrey & Susan Brotman.

***After the Rain pas de deux***® — PNB Premiere

*Music:* Arvo Pärt

*Choreography:* Christopher Wheeldon

"Spare and poignant, the duet intimates a renewal of faith, the reburgeoning of love." (*Village Voice*) Christopher Wheeldon's pas de deux from *After the Rain* is the second half of a two-part work, the first of which features an ensemble of three couples dancing to Arvo Pärt's *Tabula Rasa*. The following pas de deux is performed to Pärt's spare and tender duet for piano and violin, *Spiegel im Spiegel*. The ballerina is dressed in pink and her partner is bare-chested. In a series of unfolding partnering movements, the dancers explore the shifting emotions of their relationship. *After the Rain* pas de deux is the fourth work by Christopher Wheeldon to enter PNB's repertory.

The PNB premiere of Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain pas de deux* is generously underwritten by Ernest & Diane Burgess.

***Symphony in C***

*Music:* Georges Bizet

*Choreography:* George Balanchine © The School of American Ballet

Bizet composed his *Symphony in C* major when he was a 17-year-old pupil of Charles Gounod at the Paris Conservatory. The manuscript was lost for decades, and was published only after it was discovered in the Conservatory's library in 1933. Balanchine first learned of the long-vanished score from Stravinsky. In only two weeks, he choreographed the work as *Le Palais de Cristal* for the Paris Opera Ballet, where he was serving as a guest ballet master in 1947. When he revived the work the following year for the first performance of New York City Ballet, he simplified the sets and costumes and changed the title to *Symphony in C*.

Following the structure of the symphony, the ballet is in four movements, each featuring a different ballerina, cavalier, and corps de ballet. The first movement is formal and regal. The second movement features one of Balanchine's greatest pas de deux, and its ballerina role is considered one of the most privileged in all the Balanchine repertory. The third and fourth movements feature bravura allegro dancing. The entire cast of dancers from all four movements gathers for the impressive finale.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS:**

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, **George Balanchine** (1904-1983) is regarded as the foremost contemporary choreographer in the world of ballet. He came to the United States in late 1933, at the age of 29, accepting the invitation of the young American arts patron Lincoln Kirstein (1907-96), whose great passions included the dream of creating a ballet company in America. At Balanchine's behest, the School of American Ballet was founded in 1934, the first product of the Balanchine-Kirstein collaboration. Several ballet companies directed by the two were created and dissolved in the years that followed, while Balanchine found other outlets for his choreography. Eventually, with a performance on October 11, 1948, the New York City Ballet was born. Balanchine served as its ballet master and principal choreographer from 1948 until his death in 1983.

Balanchine's more than 400 dance works include *Serenade* (1934), *Concerto Barocco* (1941), *Le Palais de Cristal*, later renamed *Symphony in C* (1947), *Orpheus* (1948), *The Nutcracker* (1954), *Agon* (1957), *Symphony in Three Movements* (1972), *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* (1972), *Vienna Waltzes* (1977), *Ballo della Regina* (1978), and *Mozartiana* (1981). His final ballet, a new version of *Stravinsky's Variations for Orchestra*, was created in 1982. He also choreographed for films, operas, revues, and musicals. Among his best-known dances for the stage is *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, originally created for Broadway's *On Your Toes* (1936). The musical was later made into a movie.

A major artistic figure of the twentieth century, Balanchine revolutionized the look of classical ballet. Taking classicism as his base, he heightened, quickened, expanded, streamlined, and even inverted the fundamentals of the 400-year-old language of academic dance. This had an inestimable influence on the growth of dance in America. Although at first his style seemed particularly suited to the energy and speed of American dancers, especially those he trained, his ballets are now performed by all the major classical ballet companies throughout the world.

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**Jerome Robbins** (1918-1998) is world renowned for his work as a choreographer of ballets as well as his work as a director and choreographer in theater, movies and television. His Broadway shows include *On the Town*, *Billion Dollar Baby*, *High Button Shoes*, *West Side Story*, *The King and I*, *Gypsy*, *Peter Pan*, *Miss Liberty*, *Call Me Madam*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. His last Broadway production in 1989, *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, won six Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Director. Among the more than 60 ballets he created are *Fancy Free*, *Afternoon of a Faun*, *The Concert*, *Dances at a Gathering*, *In the Night*, *In G Major*, *Other Dances*, *Glass Pieces and Ives*, *Songs*, which are in the repertoires of New York City Ballet and other major dance companies throughout the world. His last ballets include *A Suite of Dances* created for Mikhail Baryshnikov (1994), *2 & 3 Part Inventions* (1994), *West Side Story Suite* (1995) and *Brandenburg* (1996). In addition to two Academy Awards for the film *West Side Story*, Mr. Robbins received four Tony Awards, five Donaldson Awards, two Emmy Awards, the Screen Directors' Guild Award, and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. Mr. Robbins was a 1981 Kennedy Center Honors Recipient and was awarded the French Chevalier dans l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur.

**Christopher Wheeldon** is considered one of the leading ballet choreographers in the world today. He was born in Somerset, England, and trained at The Royal Ballet School until 1991, when he became a company member and also won the Gold Medal at the Prix de Lausanne competition. Mr. Wheeldon danced with New York City Ballet from 1993 to 2000 and has since focused completely on choreography. He became New York City Ballet's first artist-in-residence in 2000, during which time he created *Polyphonia* and *Variations Sérieuses*, and, since 2001, has been the company's resident choreographer. In 2007, Mr. Wheeldon founded his own dance troupe: Morphoses, the Wheeldon Company.

#### **TICKET INFORMATION:**

Tickets to **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** range in price from \$25 to \$155 and may be purchased:

- \* By calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424 (Mon.-Fri. 9am–6pm; Sat. 10am–5pm)
- \* In person at the PNB Box Office, 301 Mercer Street, Seattle (Mon.-Fri. 10am–6pm; Sat. 10am–5pm)
- \* Online 24/7 at [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org)
- \* 90 minutes prior to each performance at McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street at Seattle Center, subject to availability.

#### **SPECIAL DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE:**

**25 & Under for \$15:** PNB is pleased to once again offer single tickets priced at \$15 for patrons 25 and under (two for \$25) for the Friday performances of **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** (May 29 and June 5, 7:30 pm). To purchase tickets call PNB's Box Office at 206.441.2424 or visit 301 Mercer St. Each attendee must present valid ID upon ticket retrieval. Good only for tickets to the May 29 and June 5 performances. The 25 & Under offer is subject to availability and no valid on previously purchased tickets.

Discounted **group rates** are available for audience members to gather ten or more of their friends, family and co-workers to see any performance and save up to 20%. For group tickets, please call 206.441.2416, email [juliej@pnb.org](mailto:juliej@pnb.org) or use PNB's Online Group Builder at [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org). Additionally, day-of-show **senior and student rush** discounted tickets are available. PNB is also a proud participant of Seattle Center's **Teen Tix** program. Young people 13 to 18 years old can join Teen Tix and purchase tickets to PNB performances and other music, dance, theater and arts events for only \$5. To join Teen Tix or view a list of participating organizations, visit [www.seattlecenter.com/teentix](http://www.seattlecenter.com/teentix).

## **SPECIAL EVENTS:**

### **PNB \$5 FRIDAYS – SOLD OUT**

Friday, May 22, 6:00 – 7:00 pm

*The Phelps Center, 301 Mercer Street, Seattle*

Join us for an hour-long dance preview led by Artistic Director Peter Boal and featuring PNB dancers performing excerpts from **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**. PNB \$5 Fridays offer an upbeat and up-close view of the Company preparing to put dance on stage. (This event is SOLD OUT.)

### **CONVERSATIONS WITH PNB – FREE**

Sunday, May 17, 2:00 – 3:00 pm

*Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main Street, Seattle*

PNB's Sunday afternoon series features a discussion about Jerome Robbins' *Dances at a Gathering* with artistic director Peter Boal and principal dancer Miranda Weese in the casual atmosphere of the Elliott Bay Book Company reading room. All *Conversations with PNB* are FREE of charge.

### **BALLET PREVIEW – FREE**

Tuesday, May 26, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

*Central Seattle Public Library, 1000 Fourth Avenue, Seattle*

Join PNB for a free lunchtime preview lecture at the Central Seattle Public Library. Education Programs Manager Doug Fullington will offer insights about **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE**, complete with video excerpts. FREE of charge.

### **PNB LECTURE SERIES & DRESS REHEARSAL**

Wednesday, May 27

Lecture 6:00 – 6:50 pm, *Nesholm Family Lecture Hall at McCaw Hall*

Dress Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:30 pm, *McCaw Hall*

Join PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal for an engaging interview with Founding Artistic Director Franca Russell during the hour preceding the dress rehearsal. Attend the lecture only or stay for the dress rehearsal. Tickets are \$10 for the lecture only, or \$20 for the lecture and dress rehearsal. Tickets may be purchased by calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, online at [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org), or in person at the PNB Box Office at 301 Mercer Street.

### **Pre-Performance Lectures**

Join Education Programs Manager Doug Fullington for a 30-minute introduction to each performance, including discussions of choreography, music, history, design, and the process of bringing ballet to the stage. One hour before performances in the Nesholm Family Lecture Hall at McCaw Hall. **FREE** for ticketholders.

### **Post-Performance Q&A**

After the show, skip the traffic and enjoy a post-performance Q&A with Artistic Director Peter Boal and PNB dancers. Immediately following each performance in the Norcliffe Room at McCaw Hall. **FREE** for ticketholders.

**DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** is made possible in part thanks to Presenting Sponsor PONCHO. Special thanks to season sponsors Microsoft and The John Graham Foundation, as well as 4Culture, ArtsFund, the Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Scandinavian Airlines and Washington State Arts Commission.

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*Programming subject to change. For further information, please visit: [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org).*

### **Publicity Contact**

Gary Tucker, Media Relations Manager: 206.441.2426 or [gtucker@pnb.org](mailto:gtucker@pnb.org)

### **PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET**

301 Mercer Street Seattle, WA 98109 206.441.9411 fax: 206.441.2440 [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org)

Pacific Northwest Ballet Fact Sheet

# DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

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**Dances at a Gathering** — PNB Premiere

*Music:* Frederic Chopin  
(Mazurka, Op. 63, no. 3; Waltz, Op. 69, no. 2; Mazurka, Op. 33, no. 3; Mazurka, Op. 6, no. 4; Mazurka, Op. 7, no. 5; Mazurka, Op. 7, no. 4; Mazurka, Op. 24, no. 2; Mazurka, Op. 6, no. 2; Waltz, Op. 42; Waltz, Op. 34, no. 2; Mazurka, Op. 56, no. 2; Etude, Op. 25, no. 4; Waltz, Op. 34, no. 1; Waltz, Op. 70, no. 2; Etude, Op. 25, no. 5; Etude, Op. 10, no. 2; Scherzo, Op. 20; Nocturne, Op. 15, no. 1)

*Choreography:* Jerome Robbins

*Staging:* Susan Hendl and Ben Huys

*Costume Design:* Joe Eula

*Lighting Design:* Jennifer Tipton

*Duration:* 58 minutes

*Premiere:* May 22, 1969; New York City Ballet

**Symphony in C**

*Music:* Georges Bizet  
(Symphony No. 1 in C Major, 1855)

*Choreography:* George Balanchine © The School of American Ballet

*Staging:* Franca Russell

*Costume Design:* Mark Zappone

*Lighting Design:* Randall G. Chiarelli

*Duration:* 35 minutes

*Premiere:* July 28, 1947, Paris Opera Ballet  
(originally titled *Le Palais de Cristal*);  
March 22, 1948, New York City Ballet  
(renamed *Symphony in C*)

*PNB Premiere:* March 25, 1987

**After the Rain pas de deux**® — PNB Premiere

*Music:* Arvo Pärt (*Spiegel im Spiegel*, 1978)

*Choreography:* Christopher Wheeldon

*Staging:* Damian Smith

*Costume Design:* Holly Hynes

*Lighting Design:* Mark Stanley

*Duration:* 9 minutes

*Premiere:* January 22, 2005

**When:** 7:30 pm Thursdays – Saturdays May 28-30 and June 4-6; matinees at 2:00 pm on Saturday, May 30 and 1:00 pm on Sunday, June 7.

**Where:** Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street, Seattle

**Tickets:** Tickets range in price from \$25 to \$155 and may be purchased:  
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\* Online 24/7 at [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org)  
\* 90 minutes prior to each performance at McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street  
\* Discounts available for groups of 10 or more by calling 206.441.2416 or emailing [juliej@pnb.org](mailto:juliej@pnb.org).

**Plus:** **Before the Ballet: Pre-Performance Lectures — FREE for ticketholders**  
One hour prior to all performances, *Nesholm Family Lecture Hall, McCaw Hall*  
Join Education Programs Manager Doug Fullington for a 30-minute introduction to each performance, including discussions of choreography, music, history, design and the process of bringing **DIRECTOR'S CHOICE** to the stage.

**After the Ballet: Post-Performance Q&A — FREE for ticketholders**  
Immediately following each performance, *Norcliffe Room, McCaw Hall*  
After the show, skip the traffic and enjoy a post-performance Q&A with Artistic Director Peter Boal and PNB dancers.

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